

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 1-28 are present in this application. Claims 3-28 have been withdrawn from consideration. By this Amendment, the Abstract of the Disclosure, the specification and the title of the invention have been amended. Reconsideration in view of the above amendments and the following remarks is respectfully requested.

With reference to the Office Action, with regard to the claim for foreign priority, certified copies of the priority documents were submitted on May 26, 2004. Evidence that the Patent Office has received these documents can be found in PAIR, where the documents are viewable in their entirety in Image File Wrapper. Additionally, for the Examiner's convenience, a copy of the Patent Office stamped postcard receipt is attached.

The title has been amended to be more clearly indicative of the invention to which the claims are directed. Withdrawal of the objection is requested.

Claim 1 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) over U.S. Patent No. 5,989,170 to Hart et al. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

The Office Action contends that the Hart patent discloses a disc roll including a plurality of annular disc members 16 . . . and that the disc members 16 contain a crystalline cordierite-containing ceramic, an inorganic fiber and a binder, referring to particular sections in the Hart patent. In this context, however, the disc members 16 are not in fact formed of the materials referenced in the Office Action. The sections in the Hart patent referenced in the Office Action are instead referring to load bearing members 17. Item 16 is an outer cover member formed of "compressed ceramic fiber discs." See column 7, lines 58-60. As such, these discs do not contain the claimed materials including a crystalline cordierite-containing ceramic powder, an in

organic fiber and a binder, and for at least this reason, Applicant submits that the rejection is misplaced.

The load bearing member 17 has an independent function, and Hart thus lacks the claimed plurality of annular disc members having a peripheral surface that serves as a conveying surface of the disc roll. For this reason also, Applicant submits that the rejection is misplaced.

Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection are respectfully requested.

Claim 2 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Hart. Without conceding the Office Action's contentions, Applicant respectfully submits that the Hart patent lacks any suggestion to modify its structure to correct those deficiencies noted above with regard to claim 1. Indeed, in view of the function of the load bearing member 17, Hart lacks any suggestion to utilize a plurality of such members as such a modification is contrary to the express teachings in the Hart patent. Consequently, Applicant submits that dependent claim 2 is allowable at least by virtue of its dependency on an allowable independent claim. Withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicant respectfully submits that the claims are patentable over the art of record and that the application is in condition for allowance. Should the Examiner believe that anything further is desirable in order to place the application in condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact Applicant's undersigned attorney at the telephone number listed below.

Prompt passage to issuance is earnestly solicited.

NAKAYAMA
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Respectfully submitted,

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